



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter

In Favor of SB655 Income Tax – Credit for Firearm Safety Devices

Before the Budget and Taxation Committee

on March 9, 2023

**Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the
Committee:**

- **SB655 is a “gun safety” bill that generally has universal support regardless of party or one’s position on the overall gun debate. This bill would establish a refundable tax credit up to \$250 for the purchase of a “firearm safety device.” I sponsored a similar bill last year, and it passed in the Senate.**
- **The Virginia legislature has recently passed (in a bipartisan manner) a similar measure which provides up to a \$300 tax credit for the purchase of a “firearm safety device.”**
- **A “firearm safety device” is defined to include a device that prevents the firearm from being operated without first deactivating the device and is designed to prevent the operation of a firearm. Such a device may include a safe, a gun safe, a gun case, lock box or other device designed to be or can be used to**

store a firearm, and is designed to be unlocked only by means of a key, a combination or other means.

- **The purpose of this Bill is to encourage safe storage by gun owners. Gun safes and other devices are designed to prevent a firearm from being operated without first deactivating the device, and are likely to be used when purchased.**
- **This year, I sponsored SB656 (hearing on 2/21/2023 before JPR) which would increase the penalty for an adult who fails to properly store or leaves a loaded firearm in a location where the person knew or should have known that an unsupervised child or certain ward would gain access to the firearm, resulting in the child or ward using the firearm and causing the death of another.**
- **As I mentioned at the hearing of SB 656, there are countless cases and situations in which children have had access to guns owned by their parents due to the failure of their parents/guardians to lock and store the guns, and otherwise prevent their children from gaining access to these dangerous weapons. Some of which, resulted in the death of others, suicide or serious bodily injury.**
- **According to a study published in the May 2018 Journal of Urban Health, as many of 4.6 million children live in a home where at least one (1) gun is kept loaded and unlocked. Also, according to a 2018 Johns Hopkins survey, more than half of gun owners do not safely store their guns in a locked gun safe, cabinet or case, locked into a gun rack, or stored with a trigger lock or other lock. Also, a study by**

Nationwide Children’s Hospital revealed that many parents believe that hiding their guns will prevent children from accessing them. However, seventy-five percent (75%) of children who live in homes with guns know where they are supposedly hidden.

- **I believe in a wholistic approach to safe gun storage, the old “carrot-and-stick approach.”**
- **The “stick” being criminal punishment for those who fail to properly store a loaded firearm in a locked location where the person knew or should have known that an unsupervised child or certain ward would gain access to the firearm.**
- **The “carrot” is this bill, by encouraging safe gun storage with a tax credit.**
- **With this holistic approach, we can save the lives of many children and otherwise prevent the harm caused by the lack of safe gun storage.**

For these reasons, I request a favorable report on SB655.

Sincerely,



Jill P. Carter, Esq.